

INTRODUCTION

The incumbent performs a variety of highly specialized duties involving the development, implementation, and maintenance of an early detection survey program for plant pests and weeds. Early detection of plant pests is critical to reducing potential economic and environmental losses, and could also increase the likelihood of timely eradication, or other mitigation measures. When an exotic pest is detected, the incumbent would also provide an initial leadership role in eradication or other mitigating efforts. All of these duties are an integral part of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program, in which the incumbent interfaces with state cooperators and insures all survey data is recorded into the National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS) database, which is available to cooperating stakeholders. The duties and functions performed by the incumbent are vital to the mission of APHIS PPQ and its programs to safeguard U. S. agriculture.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Provides oversight of plant pest survey programs and public awareness and outreach activities and interfaces with State CAPS committees and other State or governmental entities. Provides oversight of maintenance of data at the State level, and coordination of the initial emergency response activities if and exotic pest were discovered.

Plans and coordinates pest survey programs with PPQ, state personnel, and other cooperators and collaborators. Reviews information on the targeted exotic pests, analyzes the pathways involved, and utilizes technologies such as the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and phenology modeling software to determine the type, location, timing, and density of the survey. Determines the equipment, supplies, personnel, and costs needed in the survey.

Provides guidance to States to ensure cooperative agreements for CAPS projects are completed correctly. Provides aid in preparing proposals, work-plans, and financial-plans are part of cooperative agreements, and reviews and tracks progress of CAPS projects with State Plant Regulatory officials (SPRO's) and State Plant Health Directors (SPHD's).

Plans, directs, organizes and coordinates the work of various personnel, such as PPQ staff, state and local government employees. Reviews work for accuracy, completeness and compliance with established procedures, providing necessary documentation, reports, and data entry into NAPIS. Identifies on-the-job-training needs, develops and delivers

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appropriate general and technical training to permanent and seasonal employees, and cooperators and provides for quality control during the survey season.

Participates in the planning and coordination of treatments for newly introduced exotic pests at establishments, including laboratories, regulated facilities under permit, and nurseries, as well as on private and public lands. Participates in Regional and National emergency programs as needed.

Participates in the preparation of environmental documentation including site-specific assessments. Works in accordance with national environmental laws and regulations on the use of pesticides, biological organisms, or other technologies for treatments of newly introduced exotic pests. Consults with the local and regional authorities concerning the impact of the treatment on endangered and threatened species.

Ensures data quality and timeliness of data into NAPIS. Provides guidance to staff, state cooperators, and data entry personnel to ensure that data from all PPQ Programs is properly entered into NAPIS. Reviews NAPIS web sites for information accuracy at least 3 times a year.

Oversees pre-pest identification responsibilities (e.g. screening). Has specific knowledge of pest identification and control measures within the area of responsibility. Maintains communication with state/university/regional diagnostic laboratories used as resources for program activities and understands the process of the identification system in order to direct specimens to the correct establishment in a timely manner.

Cooperates at the SPHD's discretion, with state partners to ensure that the objectives of the biological control program are met.

Is knowledgeable in the use of computer programs (e.g. word-processing, spreadsheet, email and database software), phenology models, GIS, and GPS systems. The incumbent is expected to regularly access electronic information in order to maintain current knowledge of APHIS regulation and policy.

Provides public awareness on a variety of CAPS, PPQ and emergency programs to various state and federal cooperators, as well as the general public. Informs officials, cooperators, and public on the status of PPQ programs. Develops and maintains liaisons with other interested agencies. Develops a public awareness and outreach program with cooperators and other entities through meetings and methods of informational exchange. Participates in state and regional level CAPS and invasive species committees.

Provides and exchanges information with the SPHD, SPRO, and Plant Health Programs (PHP) and Surveillance and Emergency Program, Planning and Coordination (SEPPC) staffs regarding the status of introduced exotic and controlled pest programs in area of responsibility.

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Understands the risk of the importation of foreign cargo into the state, by analyzing information from various databases such as PIN-309, PINOPS, EAN and ASC databases to use in developing survey site selection. Maintains communication with port personnel and SITC personnel to share information, which would aid in the early detection of exotic pests.

ADDITIONAL DUTIES

Oversees equipment use for survey needs (GPS units, vehicles, survey equipment, forms, etc.)

Oversees minor basic routine maintenance on vehicles and equipment.

Oversees minor, basic, routine maintenance on vehicles and equipment assigned for program duties.

Incumbent must be knowledgeable of the procedures and policies concerning post-entry quarantine, biotechnology quarantine facilities and release of agents, and laboratory (e.g. soil, pathogens, insects, etc.) inspection procedures.

FACTOR LEVELS

1. Knowledge Required: Professional knowledge of biology as evidenced by academic training and experience in one or more of the biological sciences.

Knowledge of agricultural quarantine principles, PPQ program activities, pertinent regulations, policies and procedures.

Knowledge of the budgetary process, staffing guidelines, work load analysis and organizational structure sufficient to conduct studies, make immediate and long-range plans to meet current and projected program requirements.

Basic computer knowledge skills are required for use of Agency information management communication systems. Incumbent must be able to work with GIS, GIPS, and various software programs including mapping programs, conduct an analysis of data, and use database programs to assist in the development of survey programs.

Skill in oral and written communication to advise, consult, inform and negotiate with other Federal and State officials and other agencies and groups.

2. Supervisory Controls: Incumbent works under the general direction of management (State Plant Health Director) who provides overall direction, objectives and resources to accomplish the work. The incumbent is responsible for planning, designing, coordinating and implementing the program objectives throughout the pest detection program or particular areas of other program activities, evaluating program progress, and proposing program changes to overcome difficulties experienced during the operational aspects of the programs, as necessary. Technical recommendations are normally accepted without

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significant change. Work is reviewed by the supervisor to determine if the incumbent has met program objectives and for effectiveness in resolving programmatic deficiencies and coordination among interested parties. Incumbent will need to be a self starter who is able to plan and schedule activities and meetings, often working without direct supervision.

3. Guidelines: Various Federal laws, State laws, Executive Orders, quarantine regulations, cooperative agreements, operational plans, financial plans, policies, and directives guide the incumbent's actions. Some examples of specific laws that guide the incumbent's actions are the: Federal Plant Pest Act, Plant Quarantine Act, NEPA, ESA, APA, Honey Bee Act, and the Organic Act. Additional guidelines include program regulations, manuals, joint memoranda of understanding (MOU), scientific and technical literature, APHIS pesticide certification programs, export certification and cooperative agreement policies and procedures.

4. Complexity: The assigned activities may encompass several biological science backgrounds. It involves varied and diverse assignments with broad and markedly different activities associated with technical and scientific issues, managerial demands in coordinating available resources, and active participation in promoting, persuading and motivating various interest-based organizations regarding program objectives. The nature and diversity of activities inherently involves the need to rapidly respond to sudden and unexpected events and coupled with logical difficulties, this complicates the incumbent's efforts to accomplish the full range of projects.

The independent evaluation and analysis conducted by the incumbent of the ongoing activities within the Program requires the assessment of unusual circumstances and issues and the skillful adjustment of methods, procedures and plans to overcome the unexpected difficulties.

Decisions and problem resolution involves recommending the development and implementation of new or revised operations procedures, the initiation of guides for operating unit personnel, and the evaluation and analysis of the program execution and operation phases.

The incumbent must exercise a high degree of resourcefulness and ingenuity in devising or reviewing long-and short-range solutions to problems of a unique or novel nature, which preclude the application of standardized methods.

5. Scope and Effect: The purpose of the work is to participate in the development of the overall plans and objectives of the PPQ pest detection program(s) and to make recommendations to implement and manage all aspects of the various activities throughout the program(s). The decisions and recommendations of the incumbent may have long-range effects on similar activities nationwide.

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The cooperative functions and technical advice rendered to management are of equal importance since they affect the international, interstate and the intrastate movement of crops and agricultural products. The incumbent will need to show good cooperative efforts to further the objectives for the detection, monitoring and control of pests that could be a threat to the American agriculture and the environment.

6. Personal Contacts: Interagency contacts include other staff, pest management officials and program managers within PPQ. Contacts also include other Federal agencies (e.g., Forest Service, military), high-ranking state and county agricultural officials, local officials, cooperators (e.g., colleges and universities, stakeholders, farm groups, farm owners or contractors), and representatives from the scientific community and others in similar positions in related agencies or private groups. In some instances, the incumbent conducts or participates as an agency representative at public forums or meetings.

7. Purpose of Contacts: The purpose of contacts is for planning, developing and conducting program operations and to establish and maintain contacts with individuals and organizations through formal negotiations and working agreements with Federal, State, County and local community officials (stakeholders and cooperators). Contacts are often with individuals from different disciplines with widely different viewpoints, goals, and objectives. Public forums and meetings with other officials, particularly with key Federal, State, County and local officials, often involve discussions of controversial technical points, clarification and explanation of requirements and policies, and commitments having important implications for overall agency programs and objectives.

8. Physical Demands: Moderate to heavy physical demands is an inherent part of the job. The Pest Detection program activities require long periods of walking, often over difficult terrain. Frequent bending, stooping and crawling through confined spaces are required. Loading, unloading and carrying moderately heavy materials is sometimes necessary. Also, some administrative and laboratory-type tasks may require sitting at a desk or table for long periods of time. The incumbent must also be able to drive a motor vehicle, sometimes for extended periods of time. The incumbent may also be required to operate other equipment as required in the operation of a particular Pest Detection Survey Program. Operation of such equipment as ATV's application equipment and other others may be needed. The incumbent may be required to maintain certification for the wearing of personal protective equipment, including respirators such as SCBA and pesticide certification.

9. Work Environment: Work takes place in offices and in a variety of other outdoor locations. Some activities occur in isolated rural areas. Employees may experience discomfort due to adverse weather conditions, high noise levels, pesticides and working around agricultural or industrial equipment. Incumbents will be required to travel to remote locations at various facilities and may be required to spend extended periods of time at these locations, usually not more than 30 days. The incumbent must also be to travel on a routine basis and be willing to work at odd times.

